



# Recycling Lines

Electronic Newsletter

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Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

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DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

**Welcome to Recycling Lines.** If you have suggestions on future topics for the newsletter, please send the information to Steve Coe at [steve.coe@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:steve.coe@deq.virginia.gov).

## Rubber Manufacturers Association – 20 Years of Leadership

Twenty years ago, the U.S. was littered with more than one billion stockpiled scrap tires and only 11 percent of the annually generated scrap tires were sent to an end use market. The tire manufacturing industry was contending with a nascent scrap tire industry and a Congress that wanted results.

Rather than going from bad to worse, scrap tire management underwent a radical turnaround. Today, only 100 million stockpiled scrap tires remain and the number continues to shrink. While only one viable market for scrap tires existed in 1990, today several markets exist that consume nearly 85 percent of annually generated scrap tires. These markets have made scrap tires into a valuable commodity and have improved the environment.

A significant factor in this transformation from environmental problem to environmental success story was a tire manufacturer-led initiative. In 1990, the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) created the Scrap Tire Management Council (STMC), an organization focused on developing end use markets for scrap tires and assisting in the abatement of stockpiled tires. Although the functions of the STMC were later absorbed by RMA, the mission, commitment and effort did not change.

Since 1990, RMA's scrap tire efforts have been spearheaded by Michael Blumenthal, who began as the Scrap Tire Management Council's executive director and is now a vice president at RMA. Blumenthal identified an early key shortcoming of the scrap tire industry: a lack of information. "One of the first efforts we undertook was to collect, develop and distribute timely

(see next column)

## Did You Know?

- Annual Recycling Rate Reports from Virginia's Solid Waste Planning Units (SWPUs) are due by April 30, 2011.
- Members of the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) report reductions in their water usage by more than 994 million gallons, and their energy usage by 145 MMBTUs.

## Trivia Question

Rank the following activities based on water use, from lowest to highest:

1. Flushing a low-flush toilet
2. Five minute shower with efficient shower head
3. Wash dishes in an efficient automatic dishwasher
4. Wash a load of clothes in efficient washer

- a. 1, 2, 3, 4
- b. 1, 3, 2, 4
- c. 1, 3, 4, 2
- d. 1, 2, 4, 3 (answer on page 2)

(continued)

and pertinent information to the scrap tire industry," which then included outreach to potential end users of the processed waste tire materials.

In Virginia, waste tire material markets include tire-derived fuel (TDF), civil engineering material, and material used to make new products (examples: explosion mats, mulch, turf amendments).

*The Rubber Manufacturers Association is the national trade association for the rubber products industry. Its members include companies that manufacture various rubber products, including tires, hoses, belts, seals, molded goods, and other finished rubber products. Visit [www.rma.org](http://www.rma.org) for more information.*

**Environmental Management Systems:** An EMS provides the operational structure to evaluate the environmental impact of any operation (industrial, commercial, governmental, or institutional). Once the environmental impacts are identified, the EMS provides for development and implementation of strategies to reduce or control the environmental impacts. Many Virginia state agencies have adopted and implemented an EMS. Key components of these state agency EMS programs include: waste minimization, materials reuse, recycling, energy conservation, water conservation, efficient travel initiatives, green building programs, and green purchasing. For more information on developing an EMS, visit <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/veep> or <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/inforesources/ems/index.htm>.

## Survey: 87 percent of U.S. population can recycle paper

According to a survey from the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), 87 percent of the U.S. population — equal to 273 million people — has access to curbside and/or drop-off paper and paperboard recycling programs. The findings are from the 2010 AF&PA Community Survey, funded by the association and conducted by R. W. Beck.

Further findings indicate 63 percent of the U.S. population (193 million people) has access to curbside recycling programs and 68 percent (213 million) have access to drop-off recycling programs.

In further news from the AF&PA, the association released figures that found the U.S. paper industry consumed 31.3 million tons of recovered paper in 2010, a 7 percent more than 2009 levels. It was further reported that the U.S. exported 1 percent less recovered paper in November than in October and year-to-date recovered paper exports dipped 2 percent compared to the same months last year.

## Citizens' Group Brings Recycling Plastic Bags to the Eastern Shore

We all know it's best to bring our own bags when we go to the grocery. But most people forget now and then and the plastic bags accumulate. On the Eastern Shore of VA, the only place we could recycle the bags were at the Food Lions, but about half of them didn't even have recycling bins. At the local Convenience Centers there was a barrel for plastic bags right next to the recycling bin. Most citizens thought that meant the plastic bags were recycled.

But it wasn't so. When citizen advocacy group Waste Watchers of the Eastern Shore found out those bags were being thrown away, they took action. They asked the Public Works Department of Accomack County if those bags could be collected, baled and recycled. Not only did Accomack County agree to give it a try, they also volunteered to recycle Northampton's plastic bags as well.

That was a year ago and during this time the Eastern Shore of Virginia has recycled 2200 LBs of plastic bags, well beyond their original expectations. When you consider how many plastic bags it takes to make even one pound, that number becomes even more impressive. If your county doesn't collect and recycle plastic bags, try the Waste Watchers way- work with your county officials to see what can happen.

*Contributed by: Jenny O'Neill, Coordinator, Waste Watchers of the Eastern Shore, Box 191 Onancock, VA 23417 757-787-7468*

**Trivia Question: Answer is b (from the Environmental Research Center). See how much water you consume by visiting <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/sq3.html>**

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## USPS Saves Money by Going Green

The U.S. Postal Service saved more than \$14.1 million last year by recycling more and using less energy, the government enterprise said. Using "Lean Green Teams" charged with finding ways to save resources and money, the postal service recycled more than 222,000 tons of material -- an increase of nearly 8,000 tons from 2009 -- and generating \$13 million in revenue. The USPS also saved \$9.1 million in landfill fees.

More than \$5 million in reductions of energy, water and fuel were also made, the postal service said. "Across the country, postal employees are participating in more than 80 cross-functional Lean Green Teams that are producing significant results in energy reduction and resource conservation," said Emil Dzuray, acting chief sustainability officer. "With nearly 32,000 facilities, a presence in every community, and the largest civilian fleet in the nation, we know how important our efforts are to make a positive impact on the environment," Dzuray added. "Our employee green teams are an important part of building a conservation culture and reducing our carbon footprint."

By 2015, the postal service has set a goal of reducing energy use by 30%, fuel consumption by 20%, water use by 10% and landfill waste by 50%. For more information about the postal service's sustainability initiatives, visit <http://www.usps.com/green>.

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## Web Links of Interest:

<http://www.p2pays.org/dmrm/start.aspx> (search directory for processors for a wide range of recyclables in Mid-Atlantic area)

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserves/materials/organics/food/d-donate.htm> (promotes donations of grown and canned foodstuffs within localities)

[www.abagslife.com](http://www.abagslife.com) (searchable database for recycling centers for plastic bags)

[www.helpmecompost.com](http://www.helpmecompost.com) (composting information and links to composters)

## Calendar of Events

**March 29-April 1:** Carolina Recycling Association's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference and Trade Show, Charleston, SC. Visit [www.cra2011.org](http://www.cra2011.org).

**April 2:** Clean Rivers Day (visit [www.vcnva.org](http://www.vcnva.org))

**April 5 - 7:** Environment Virginia 2011, *Sustainable Solutions for Uncertain Times*, VMI. Visit [www.vmi.edu](http://www.vmi.edu).

**April 13:** Recycling Markets Development Council meeting, George Washington Regional Commission office, Fredericksburg, VA. 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.